

USS INDEPENDENCE (CV 62)



Wednesday

April
1995



The DECLARATION

"News for and about Freedom's Flagship and beyond"

NEWS: U.S./China at odds

SPORTS: Courier takes Open

Briefly

Rec Services Hours

Recreation Services has new hours to help better serve the crew.

The office, located in the aft gym, is open daily 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. Cash transactions are conducted from 9 a.m. to noon and 2 to 7 p.m.

JO strikers needed

The Public Affairs Office is looking for Indy personnel who want to be Navy journalists.

Those selected will work on the ship's newspaper, TV and radio station in addition to other projects like the ship's cruisebook and video cruisebook.

Interested personnel must submit a typed resume of their journalism experience and 200-word essay on why they want to be journalists.

Packages must be submitted to Chief Journalist Lance Johnson in the Public Affairs Office no later than April 21.

Hong Kong Port Brief

INDY-TV will be showing the Hong Kong port brief this morning at 9 a.m. on Channel 8. If you miss it don't worry -- it will be shown every six hours until we pull in!

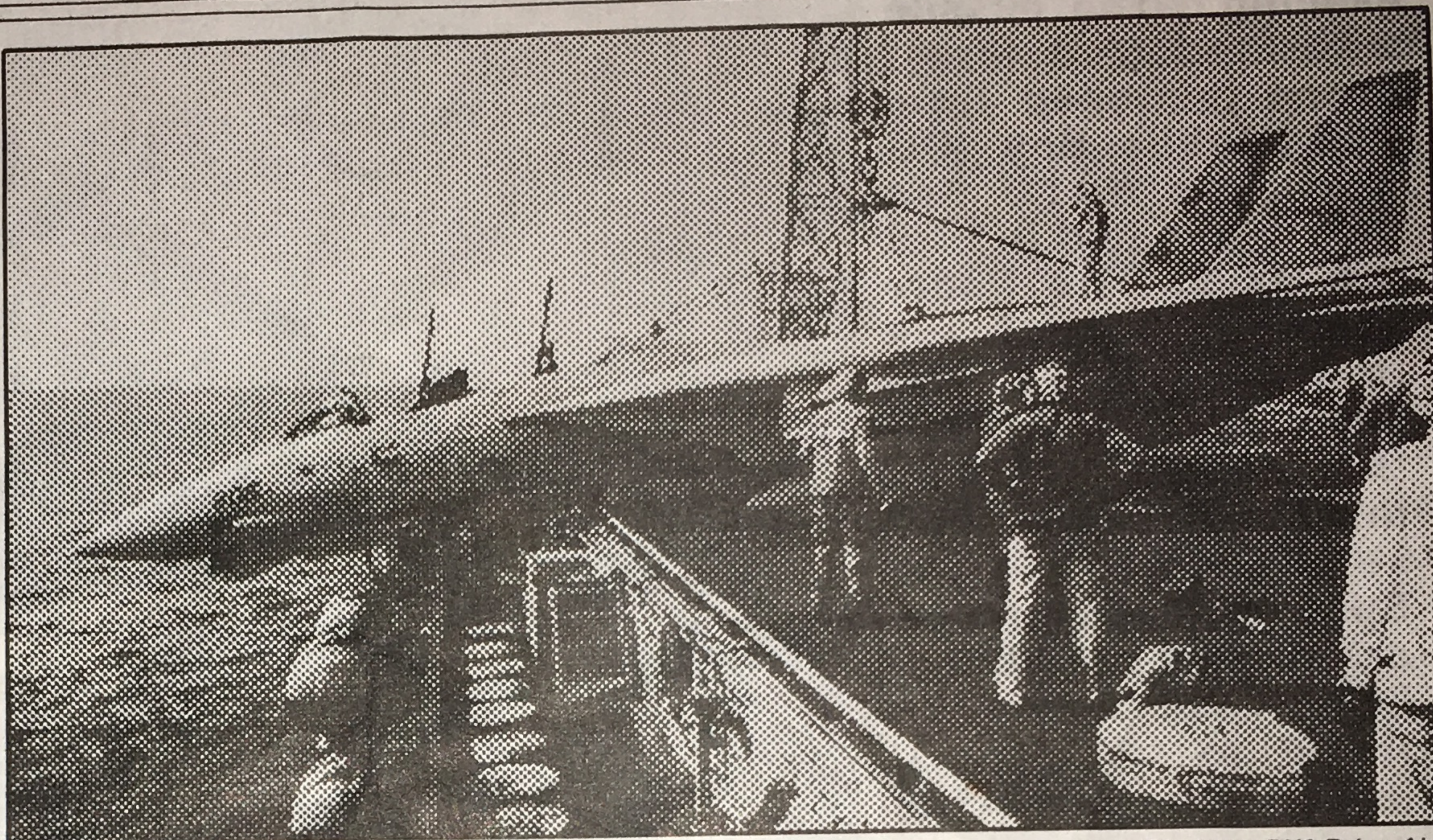


Photo by PH3 Brien Aho

Flight deck personnel work to remove an F-14A Tomcat from the port-side catwalk. The aircraft's nose wheel slipped off the flight deck as the aircraft was taxiing towards Cat 4. The crew ejected safely and were recovered by two HS-14 helos within minutes. Neither crewmember was injured.

VF-21 Tomcat crew safe after close call on flight deck

By JO2 Jason Chudy

An F-14A Tomcat crew from VF-21 ejected from the cockpit yesterday morning after the aircraft's nose wheel slipped into the port-side catwalk. Both crewmen were plucked out of the ocean by helo and returned to the carrier within minutes.

Neither the pilot or radar intercept officer were injured.

The aircraft was in line for launch from Catapult 4 when the nose wheel slipped into the catwalk about 8:55 a.m.

The pilots ejected and parachuted safely into the ocean. The ship called a man overboard and prepared to rescue them.

Two SH-60F Seahawk helicopters from HS-14 were flying nearby and diverted for the rescue. According to Aviation Warfare Systems Operator 3rd Class (NAC) Paul D. Perry, the rescue went quickly and easily. "The (Air) Boss (Cmdr. Anthony Reade) called both helos in," Perry explained about the rescue. "The other rescue swimmer (Aviation Warfare Systems Operator (NAC) 2nd Class Sean Matney) was

See F-14, page 4

Today's Weather

Partly cloudy, showers in evening Sunrise: 0547 Sunset: 1836
High: 79 Low: 71 Winds: SW 15 knots Seas: 4-6 feet



F-14

From page 1

lowered in the water and then I was.

"There were no parachutes attached, so there were no problems with them getting tangled in the shrouds," the 21-year-old Perry explained. "I appraised his (the pilot's) situation, asked him quick medical questions --if he was all right, did he have any back problems. He was upset, but physically unhurt."

Both aircrew members were moved into the helos and returned to the ship. This is not the first rescue for Perry, he rescued the two pilots from the lost SH-60F helicopter.

Back on Indy they walked to the ship's Medical Department for observation and later returned to the squadron.

While the pilots were being rescued, flight deck personnel were busy saving the aircraft from completely falling off the flight deck.

Aviation Electronics Technician Chief(AW) Lou Suarez, flight deck coordinator for VF-154 watched the aircraft slip into the catwalk.

Suarez had two aircraft getting ready for launch when he caught something out of the corner of his eye. "As soon as I turned around it was going into the catwalk," he explained. "The canopy flew off the aircraft and I saw the NFO shoot off towards the bow and the pilot to the rear.

"I thought it was an illusion," Suarez continued. "I didn't believe it."

His disbelief was quickly washed away and he realized something needed to be done. "The first thing in my mind was to secure the engines to prevent any further mishaps," he explained. The engines on the fighter were still on. "I secured most of the people from the area, climbed into

the catwalk, jumped into the cockpit and shut down the port and starboard motors."

Once the engines were shut off, flight deck personnel secured the aircraft to the deck with tie-down chains.

For his quick actions, Rear Admiral B.J. Smith, Battle Force Seventh Fleet, presented Suarez with a Navy Achievement Medal (NAM).

With the aircraft in place, Tilly, the ship's crash crane, was brought up to move the aircraft.

As the aircraft was in line to launch, it was full of fuel. This extra weight put it over the maximum allowable weight for Tilly.

To lighten the aircraft, fuel was removed from its tanks. Airman Andryl Spikes of V-4 prepared the aircraft for defueling. "(Flight Deck) Control told us to defuel it," he said. "So I set up the station."

To prepare the station, Spikes had to lean out over the edge of the catwalk. Holding on to him was Airman Recruit Kristian

Wade, also of V-4.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuels) 3rd Class Desi Jackson relieved Spikes and began defueling the aircraft -- with Wade hanging on to him by his belt.

Leaning 60 feet over the ocean, defueling an aircraft, Jackson said only one thing was going through his mind. "All I was thinking of was doing my job as safely and professionally as possible," he explained after receiving a NAM for his actions that evening.

Wade added that there was something else running through his head. "I knew if I let go he'd probably be really mad," Wade kidded. Both Wade and Spikes also received NAMs for their parts.

Once the fuel was removed, Tilly lifted the aircraft back on to the flight deck.

It was later moved into Hangar Bay Two for repairs.

An investigation into the cause of the incident is currently being conducted.



Photo by PH3 Lou Messing

Rear Admiral B.J. Smith, Battle Force Seventh Fleet, addresses I-5 members after presenting four personnel with Navy Achievement Medals for their actions during yesterday morning's mishap. The awardees are, from left, AEC(AW) Lou Suarez, ABF3 Desi Jackson, AR Kristian Wade and AN Andryl Spikes.